

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 07335 120342Z

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 AF-08

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R 120225Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9077

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

SECDEF

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 7335

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, XO, AS, US, PING, UK

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN REQUEST TO USE DIEGO GARCIA

REF: STATE 251241 (082205Z OCT 76)

1. THE FRASER GOVERNMENT STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE US BUILDUP OF THE DIEGO GARCIA FACILITY AND A CONTINUING US MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.
2. THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR DEFENSE KILLEN ARE ALSO ANXIOUS TO MAKE AMODEST AUSTRALIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE FREE WORLD MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.
3. AN AUSTRALIAN PROPOSAL TO STAGE ONE, OR AT MOST TWO, FLIGHTS A MONTH FROM THE COCOS TO DIEGO GARCIA AND BACK TO AUSTRALIA WOULD BE A TANGIBLE DEMONSTRATION THAT A LITTORAL STATE SUPPORTS OUR PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.
4. DEPT. SHOULD BE AWARE THAT AGOA DECISION TO CONDUCT SURVEILLANCE FLIGHTS TO AND FROM DIEGO GARCIA WOULD BE STRONGLY CRITICIZED BY OPPOSITION LEADER WHITLAM AND THE ALP.

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WHITLAM BELIEVES THAT THE USG NEVER MADE A SERIOUS EFFORT

TO DISCUSS MUTUAL RESTRAINT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WITH
THE SOVIETS AND TENDS TO SUPPORT THE VIEWS OF INDIA AND OTHER
THIRD WORLD LITTORAL STATES ABOUT THE MILITARY PRESENCE
OF THE GREAT POWERS IN THE OCEAN.

5. WE BELIEVE A GOA DECISION TO STAGE SUCH FLIGHTS WOULD
BE POLITICALLY POPULAR IN AUSTRALIA AND THAT WHITLAM
CANNOT GET MUCH POLITICAL MILEAGE FROM CRITICIZING SUCH A
DECISION.
HARGROVE

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